

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
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R 220846Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8696
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
CINCPAC
CINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 KABUL 5048

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, PGOV, EFIN, AF
SUBJECT: NEW REGIME TIGHTENS ITS HOLD ON THE LEVERS OF POWER

REF: KABUL 4646

1. SUMMARY. THE TWO-MONTH OLD GOVERNMENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
OF AFGHANISTAN (DRA) CONTINUES TO TIGHTEN ITS GRIP ON THE COUNTRY.
THE INFLUX OF SOVIET ADVISERS FLOWS UNABATED WITH A NOW ESTIMATED
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400-500 NEW SOVIETS IN THE COUNTRY, OVER AND ABOVE, THE 1,600 WHO
WERE HERE BEFORE THE COUP. NOT A DAY PASSES WITHOUT THE GOVERNMENT-
CONTROLLED KABUL PRESS FEATURING SOME SOVIET ACTIVITY OR VISITING
DELEGATION. WHILE REPORTS OF RESISTANCE IN TWO OF THE EASTERN TRIBAL
PROVINCES PERSIST, WE SEE NO SERIOUS THREAT TO THE REGIME FROM THAT
QUARTER. IN KABUL, CALM PREVAILS, BUT FEAR OF THE REGIME AMONG
THE PUBLIC IS WIDESPREAD, AND WE CONTINUE TO HEAR OF POST-CURFEW

MIDNIGHT ARRESTS. FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES WE HEAR THERE ARE TENSIONS BETWEEN THE TARAKI AND BABRAK WINGS IN THE PARTY, AND A GROWING CONCERN IN SOME ELEMENTS OF THE MILITARY OVER THE INCREASING SOVIET PRESENCE. THE SITUATION THUS REMAINS UNSTABLE, WITH AN EVER PRESENT POSSIBILITY OF AN IN-PARTY PURGE, COUNTER-COUP, OR FIGHTING BREAKING OUT.

2. AS REGARDS U.S. PROGRAMS, WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT, IN PRINCIPLE, ALL EXISTING USAID PROGRAMS ARE TO BE CONTINUED. WE HAVE LIKEWISE EXPERIENCED ALMOST NO CURTAILMENT OF USICA ACTIVITIES, EXCEPT IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAM WHERE ONE PARTICIPATING MINISTRY HAS HINTED IT PLANS TO DISCONTINUE SENDING ITS OFFICIALS. THE OUTLOOK FOR THE PEACE CORPS HAS WORSENERED, WITH PREMIER TARAKI STATING HE WAS UNENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE PROGRAM. NO FORMAL REQUESTS FOR NEW PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED FROM ANY MINISTRY. IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR, THE GOVERNMENT HAS INDICATED IT WISHES THE ARINA/PANAM PARTNERSHIP TO CONTINUE, BUT ONE OF THE FEW OTHER AMERICAN BUSINESSES HERE, AND INDIAN/AMERICAN POINT VENTURE TRADING COMPANY, HAS BEEN ASKED TO END ITS OPERATIONS. END SUMMARY.

3. SOME U.S. GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE ACTIVITIES BEING CURTAILED.

OVER THE LAST TWO WEEKS, THE EXPERIENCES OF VARIOUS U.S. GOVT AGENCIES AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS HAVE BEEN MIXED. THE EMBASSY'S OWN OPERATIONS HAVE NOT BEEN RESTRICTED, EXCEPT FOR THE HANDICAPS OF THE CONTINUING COUNTRY-WIDE 11:00 PM CURFEW, AND LIMITED ATTENDANCE

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OF AFGHAN OFFICIALS AT SOCIAL FUNCTIONS. U.S.I.C.A. PROGRAMMING IS OPERATING AT A NEAR NORMAL CLIP, AND AFGHAN ATTENDANCE AT AMERICAN FUNCTIONS HAS BEEN HIGHER THAN MIGHT HAVE BEEN ANTICIPATED SEVERAL WEEKS AGO. OUR EXCHANGE PROGRAMS HAVE HIT SOME SNAGS, HOWEVER, AS SEVERAL CANDIDATES WERE REJECTED BY US AS UNQUALIFIED FOR THEIR PROSPECTIVE PROGRAMS. AS REGARDS OUR SMALL MILITARY-TRAINING-IN-THE-U.S. PROGRAM, THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE HAS CHOSEN ONLY TO FILL TWO OF EIGHT STILL AVAILABLE SLOTS UNDER THE FY 78 PROGRAM. IN THE AID FIELD, WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT, IN PRINCIPLE, ALL EXISTING PROGRAMS ARE TO BE CONTINUED, BUT WE ARE STILL WAITING FORMAL NOTIFICATION FROM THE PLANNING MINISTRY THAT THIS IS SO. IN GENERAL, PROGRAMS IN THE AGRICULTURAL FIELD APPEAR THE MOST ACCEPTABLE TO THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT, ALTHOUGH THE CHILLY RECEPTION INITIALLY ACCORDED OUR HEALTH PROGRAMS MAY BE CHANGING TO SOME DEGREE

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4. THE USG ACTIVITY NOW APPEARING MOST VULNERABLE IS PEACE CORPS. PREMIER TARAKI CLEARLY INDICATED TO AMBASSADOR ELITO ON JUNE 11 HIS NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE PROGRAM, AND NO AFGHAN MINISTRY HAS YET FORMALLY REQUESTED ANY NEW VOLUNTEERS. THE PRESENT OUTLOOK THEREFORE FOR THE PEACE CORPS IS NOT PROMISING. FIVE MORE PCVS HAVE REQUESTED EARLY TERMINATION, BRINGING THE TOTAL OF PCVS IN

THE COUNTRY TO 67 FROM ABOUT 91 TWO MONTHS AGO.

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

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5. IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR, THE GOVERNMENT HAS INFORMED PANAM IT WISHES TO CONTINUE THE ARIANA/PANAM PARTNERSHIP. BUT ANOTHER OF OUR AMERICAN BUSINESSES HERE, INDAMER -- A JOINT INDIAN/AMERICAN TRADING VENTURE -- HAS BEEN TOLD TO DISCONTINUE OPERATING IN THIRTY DAYS. A SIMILAR NOTICE HAS BEEN SENT TO A BRITISH TRADING COMPANY; BOTH COMPANIES HAD BEEN IN TAX DIFFICULTIES WITH THE LAST GOVERNMENT.

6. SECURITY IS STILL THE REGIME'S HIGHEST PRIORITY. CONSOLIDATION REMAINS THE REGIME'S WATCHWORD AS IT ATTEMPTS TO BROADEN ITS RELATIVELY NARROW BASE OF SUPPORT. THE LEADERSHIP, UNQUESTIONABLY

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COGNIZANT OF POTENTIAL OPPOSITION FROM THE RELIGIOUSLY CONSERVATIVE MASSES, CONTINUES TO REASSURE THE POPULATION OF THE REGIME'S ISLAMIC CREDENTIALS. THIS IS NEVER DONE DIRECTLY, HOWEVER; THE USUAL LUKEWARM FORMULATION IS THAT "WE ARE SONS OF MUSLIMS, AND RESPECT THE PRINCIPLES OF ISLAM." CONCERN FOR CITIZENS CAUGHT UP IN THE FORMER REGIME'S JUDICIAL SYSTEM HAS ALSO EMERGED AS A POPULAR GOVERNMENTAL THEME. THE REGIME HAS PROMISED REFORM OF THE PRISONS, AND ON JUNE 22 BEGAN RELEASING SOME NON-POLITICAL PRISONERS. ONE ANNOUNCEMENT CLAIMED THAT OVER EIGHT THOUSAND PENDING CASES HAD BEEN DECIDED BY SPECIAL COMMITTEES IN 21 WORK DAYS, A REMARKABLE PACE WHICH CONSTITUTED A LEGAL DECISION EVERY ONE OR TWO MINUTES.

7. THE GOVERNMENT TERSELY ANNOUNCED JUNE 13 THAT THE 35-MEMBER REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL WOULD BE EXPANDED BY THIRTEEN NEW MEMBERS, BUT NO NAMES WERE PROVIDED. THIS DECISION COULD REFLECT AN EFFORT TO FORESTALL ANY ACTION BY DISGRUNTLED INDIVIDUALS (ESPECIALLY MILITARY OFFICERS) WHO MAY HAVE FELT EXCLUDED FROM THE INNER CIRCLES OF POLITICAL POWER. IN THIS REGARD, THE REGIME HAS ALSO BESTOWED PROMOTIONS ON SCORES OF MILITARY OFFICERS AND CIVILIAN BUREAUCRATS, INCLUDING DEFENSE MINISTER ABDUL QADER WHO WAS ELEVATED FROM COLONEL TO MAJOR GENERAL. THE FORMER ROYAL FAMILY AND ITS RELATIVES CONTINUE TO RECEIVE BRICKBATS IN THE MEDIA, AND ON JUNE 15 THE REGIME DIVESTED 23 FAMILY MEMBERS OF THEIR AFGHAN CITIZENSHIP.

8. AFGHAN TV RESUMED OPERATIONS JUNE 15, ON A ONCE A WEEK BASIS WITH PROGRAMMING FOR ONE HOUR CONSISTING MOSTLY OF POLITICAL HARANGUES. THE CARPETS, CLEANED OF MOST BLOODSTAINS, WHICH WERE OSTENSIBLY IN THE ROOM WHERE THE DAOUD AND NAIM FAMILIES WERE KILLED ON APRIL 28, WERE ALSO DISPLAYED ON THE BROADCAST. THE STATION'S LOGO CONTAINED A SUN RISING OVER MOUNTAIN PEAKS (A FIXTURE ON THE PUSHTUNISTAN FLAG) AS WELL AS A FIVE-POINTED RED STAR. THE REGIME ALSO ANNOUNCED JUNE 13 THAT A NEW NATIONAL FLAG

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HAD BEEN DECIDED UPON, BUT, SO FAR, IT HAS NOT APPEARED. RUMORS CONTEND THAT THE FLAG WILL BE RED AND PERHAPS HAVE A HAMMER AND SICKLE, AS WELL AS STARS.

9. ANTI-REGIME OPPOSITION IS NOT COMPLETELY ERADICATED. WE CONTINUE TO RECEIVE RELIABLE REPORTS OF FIGHTING IN THE COUNTRY'S EASTERN PROVINCES OF KONAR AND, ESPECIALLY, PAKTIA. KABUL REMAINS CALM, HOWEVER, AND THERE HAVE BEEN NO OUTWARD INDICATIONS OF INCREASED ALERTNESS ON THE PART OF THE TROOPS STATIONED IN THE CAPITAL. NEVERTHELESS, OVER THE PAST WEEK OR SO WE HAVE HEARD HEIGHTENED MILITARY JET ACTIVITY OVER THE CITY, USUALLY DURING THE NIGHT. CONCEIVABLY, THESE AIRCRAFT COULD BE RETURNING TO BAGRAM AIR BASE (25 MILES NORTH OF KABUL)

FROM STRIKES IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. A NATION-WIDE OVERNIGHT CURFEW REMAINS IN EFFECT, AND, INTER ALIA, APPARENTLY COVERS THE GOVERNMENT'S ONGOING ARRESTS OF INDIVIDUAL AFGHANS.

10. OPPOSITION, OR AT LEAST DISSATISFACTION, IS NOT CONFINED TO THE TRIBAL AREAS. REPORTS REACHING US FROM MANY QUARTERS INDICATE THAT THE "MASSES" ARE EXTREMELY UNHAPPY WITH THE NEW ORDER, AND THAT THESE SENTIMENTS HAVE BEEN EXPRESSED IN UNDERGROUND "NIGHT LETTERS," OR IN PAMPHLETS SENT TO TARAKI. OTHERS, HOWEVER, SOME OF WHOM MAY EVEN HAVE WELCOMED THE PASSING OF THE MOHAMMADZAI DYNASTY, ARE ALSO REPORTEDLY BECOMING DISILLUSIONED WITH THE PERCEIVED DIRECTION OF THIS GOVERNMENT. SPECIFICALLY, THE MASSIVE INFLUX OF SOVIET ADVISERS, AND THE CONSTANT DRUMBEAT OF PRO-SOVIET PROPAGANDA, HAS PROMPTED SOME AFGHANS TO QUESTION WHETHER A SOVIET OCCUPATION IS REALLY WHAT THE APRIL REVOLUTION WAS ALL ABOUT. IN THIS REGARD, WE HAVE HEARD FROM A YOUNG BUT STAUNCH KHALQIST SYMPATHIZER THAT HE IS DISTRAUGHT OVER THE LEADERSHIP'S "SELL-OUT" OF AFGHANISTAN TO THE SOVIET UNION, ESPECIALLY AFTER HE HAD SEEN "RUSSIANS WEARING AFGHAN MILITARY UNIFORMS" AT THE DEFENSE MINISTRY. THE ISSUE OF HOW FAR TO GO IN COURTING AFGHANISTAN'S NORTHERN NEIGHBOR COULD REPRESENT THE PRINCIPAL SOURCE OF POTENTIAL SCHISMS BETWEEN THE FACTIONS WITHIN THE PARTY AND THE MILITARY. IN THIS REGARD, WE NOTE
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WITH INTEREST TARAKI'S REPEATED REFERENCES OVER MOSCOW TELEVISION (MOSCOW 13901) TO THE PRINCIPLE OF NON-INTERFERENCE IN OTHER COUNTRIES' INTERNAL AFFAIRS. CONCEIVABLY, TARAKI (WHO WE BELIEVE IS MORE NATIONALISTIC THAN HIS MORE PRO-SOVIET NEMESIS BABRAK KARMAL) MAY HAVE BEEN HINTING AT POSSIBLE DANGERS WHICH MIGHT LIE AHEAD SHOULD THE REGIME GO TOO FAR DOWN THE SOVIET PATH.

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R 220846Z JUN 78
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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

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11. FOREIGN RELATIONS REMAIN HEAVILY WEIGHTED IN MOSCOW'S
FAVOR.

WELL-PUBLICIZED ECONOMIC AGREEMENTS WITH THE SOVIET UNION
NOW NUMBER
TWENTY-FIVE, AND, IN VIEW OF THE NUMEROUS
SIGNING CEREMONIES, SOME LOCAL WAGS WONDER HOW LONG ECONOMIC
COUNSELOR BORIS TITOV CAN AVOID WRITER'S CRAMP. SEVERAL
SOVIET DELEGATIONS HAVE MADE THEIR WAY TO KABUL RECENTLY,
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INCLUDING ONE HEADED BY DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION
NIKOLAI NIKOLAIVICH SOSINTSKIY, AND ONE FROM THE SOVIET
STATE PUBLISHING COMMITTEE. THE STEADY INFLUX OF SOVIET
"ADVISERS" CONTINUES UNABATED, AND WE HAVE HEARD THAT MANY
AFGHANS HAVE BEEN EVICTED FROM THEIR APARTMENTS IN A SOVIET-
BUILT HOUSING AREA OF KABUL IN ORDER TO MAKE ROOM FOR THEIR
RUSSIAN "COMPATRIOTS". WE HAVE ALSO HEARD THAT THE GOVERN-
MENT HAS DECIDED TO MAKE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION
COMPULSORY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS. THE REGIME HAS NOT NEG-
LECTED ITS RELATIONS WITH OTHER EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES,
AND THE MOST SIGNIFICANT RECENT EVENT IN THIS REGARD WAS
THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
(GDR) AND THE DRA HAD AGREED TO ESTABLISH RESIDENT MISSIONS
AT THE AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL. THE GDR DIPLOMATIC ENTOURAGE
IS ALREADY IN KABUL, AND PLEDGES OF ECONOMIC AND PERHAPS
OTHER ASSISTANCE WILL PROBABLY NOT BE FAR BEHIND.

12. COMPARED WITH THE ATTENTION GIVEN TO ITS TIES WITH MOSCOW, THE REGIME PAID LITTLE HEED TO OUR OWN BILATERAL RELATIONS OVER THE PAST TWO WEEKS. AMBASSADOR ELIOT'S JUNE 14 DEPARTURE ON TRANSFER RECEIVED A FEW LINES ON THE BACK PAGE OF THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED KABUL TIMES, AND A FOREIGN MINISTRY DEPUTY CHIEF OF PROTOCOL WAS THE ONLY AFGHAN OFFICIAL PRESENT AT THE AIRPORT. NEVERTHELESS, A BREAKTHROUGH OF SORTS WAS MADE AS THE VERNACULAR AND ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRESS CARRIED TWO PHOTOS (WITH BRIEF ACCOMPANYING STORIES) OF OUR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER PRESENTING BOOKS TO LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS. IN SUM, THE SOVIET UNION, PUBLICLY AND BEHIND THE SCENES, CONTINUES TO SOLIDIFY ITS POSITION HERE, PERHAPS RECOGNIZING THAT THE REGIME'S BASE OF SUPPORT IS NOT BROAD.

13. FREE ENTERPRISE SUFFERS SOME SETBACK.
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MOST OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTIONS IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD HAVE NOT BEEN HELPFUL TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR. TWO FOREIGN COMPANIES (ONE AMERICAN--INDAMER--AND ONE BRITISH) HAVE BEEN TOLD TO CEASE THEIR TRADING OPERATIONS, ALTHOUGH INDAMER BELIEVES IT MAY BE ABLE TO CONTINUE OTHER COMMERCIAL ENDEAVORS. ADDITIONALLY, MANY OF THE LARGEST MONEY CHANGERS IN THE OLD BAZAAR--AFGHAN HINDUS--WERE ARRESTED ABOUT TWO WEEKS AGO, AND, EVEN THOUGH MOST HAVE BEEN RELEASED, SOME HAVE DECIDED NOT TO RESUME THEIR ACTIVITIES IN THE NEAR FUTURE, IF EVER. THE MONEY MERCHANTS ARE CERTAINLY RUNNING SCARED AT THE MOMENT, AND PARTIALLY AS A RESULT OF THE REDUCED ACTIVITIES OF THE MONEY BAZAAR, THE AFGHANI HAS BEEN RISING STRONGLY IN RELATION TO FOREIGN CURRENCIES (THE AF. WAS OFFICIALLY PEGGED AT 38.50 TO THE DOLLAR ON JUNE 14). SHORTAGES HAVE BEGUN TO EMERGE TOO WITH MEDICINES NOW BECOMING SCARCE. HOW LONG THIS FINANCIAL ANOMOLY CAN LAST IS UNCERTAIN, BUT THE STAG-NATING ECONOMY, AND APPREHENSION ON THE PART OF MERCHANTS AND TRADERS, MAY EVENTUALLY PROMPT THE DRA TO ASK SOMEONE LIKE THE SOVIET UNION TO STEP IN TO TAKE UP THE ECONOMIC SLACK.

14. CONCLUSIONS. OVER THE PAST TWO WEEKS, THE REGIME HAS CONTINUED EFFORTS TO CONSOLIDATE ITS OWN SECURITY, BUT REPORTS OF RESISTANCE AND GROWING DISSATISFACTION PERSIST. AT THIS POINT, THE DISENCHANTMENT APPEARS TO BE FOCUSSING ON THE REGIME'S DEEP AND EXPANDING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE USSR. IN OUR VIEW, THIS ISSUE COULD WELL BE THE ONE WHICH COULD PROVOKE DIVISIONS WITHIN THE MILITARY AND CIVILIAN LEADERSHIP. SUCH SCHISMS REMAIN THE MOST LIKELY THREAT TO THE STABILITY OF THIS REGIME, ESPECIALLY IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY OTHER DISCERNIBLE DOMESTIC OR FOREIGN DANGER.

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